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1904

EXHIBITION OF
PAINTINGS AND LACQUER
BY MEMBERS OF THE
NIPPON-BIJITSUIN

NOVEMBER
1904

EXHIBITION OF
JAPANESE PAINTINGS ON SILK

BY

YOKOYAMA-TAIKAN, HISHIDA-SHIUNSO
AND SHIMOMURA-KWANZAN

AND

LACQUER WORKS

BY

ROKKAKU-SHISUI

OF THE

NIPPON-BIJITSUIN

(Japanese Fine Arts Academy.)

With a Sketch of the Work of the Nippon-Bijitsuin, by
OKAKURA-KAKUZO.

Cambridge 1904.



Paintings by Hishida-Shiunso.

- 1 Meeting the Dawn
- 2 Flowers of the Sea
- 3 The Scythed Moon
- 4 Mist on the River
- 5 Cat
- 6 Spring Rain
- 7 Waning Light
- 8 Solitude
- 9 Deer
- 10 Home of the Sea-gulls
- 11 A Fisherman
- 12 Fujisan
- 13 Gust on the River
- 14 The Approach of Evening
- 15 Twilight
- 16 Pines on the Beach
- 17 Ducks in Snow
- 18 Winter Morning
- 19 Iris
- 20 The Rainy Season
- 21 Returning Boats

Paintings by Shimomura-Kwanzan.

- 22 Fudo
 - 23 Return Home
-

Paintings by Yokoyama-Taikan.

- 24 Fishermen
- 25 Evening Bell
- 26 Mist on the Hills
- 27 Moonlight on the Spring Sea
- 28 Moonlight on the Summer Sea
- 29 Moonlight on the Autumn Sea
- 30 Moonlight on the Winter Sea
- 31 Shooting the Rapids
- 32 On the Bridge
- 33 Autumn Rain
- 34 A Warm Day in Winter
- 35 Fujisan
- 36 Golden Rod
- 37 Winter Moon
- 38 Goldfishes

- 39 Beverly Rocks
 - 40 The Cuckoo
 - 41 Herons in Rain
 - 42 A Misty Night
 - 43 Rain on the River
 - 44 A Phantasy
 - 45 Rainy Season
 - 46 Iris
 - 47 Breath of Snow
 - 48 The Tenderness of Night
-

Lacquer by Rokkaku-Shisui.

- 49 Iris
- 50 Chestnuts
- 51 The Beach
- 52 Ink Box
- 53 Ink Box

The Bijitsuin OR THE New Old School of Japanese Art.

Mr. Yokoyama-Taikan, Mr. Hishida-Shiunso, and Mr. Rokkaku-Shisui, whose works are to be exhibited at Cambridge this month, are prominent members of the Nippon-Bijitsuin (Hall of Fine Arts), which represent the new old school of Japanese Art.

The real meaning and the position which the Bijitsuin holds amongst us may, perhaps, be unintelligible without some knowledge of our various art movements which, as in everything which concerns modern Japan, are working side by side, each seeking its ascendancy in a tangled web of Eastern traditions and Western thought.

It is sufficient to say here that New Japan is not merely a restoration, nor is it a transformation, but that the forces that are building her national consciousness are as much a recovery of ancient modes as an assimilation of the Occidental methods and energy. The conflict which results from these rival activities has often landed us in dilemmas, curious, ridiculous, perhaps painful, to alien eyes. The unexpected ludicrousness of the paradox is there, and sometimes with its cruelty.

The same traditional and historical spirit which in 1868 had reinstated the full authority of the Mikado, long under the shadow of the Tokugawa regency,

has been working since a century ago in the field of art and letters. Hand in hand with the revival of national literature, the graphic arts have been trying to break through the conventionalism imposed upon them by the Tokugawa regime, and attempting to return to the classic models. Thus rose a great school of archæologists and a host of copyists. The temple treasures and the Daimio's collections, which became accessible to research during the present reign, stimulated the study of ancient masterpieces. But the conservatives, in their eagerness for resuscitation, forgot that art is life, and can belong only to its own age. However valuable their efforts may be in contributing to archæology and the maintenance of the standard of taste, their productions are, after all, but an echo of the past. Pseudo-classicism is apt to degenerate into affectations and mannerisms which discolor even the source of its inspiration.

On the other hand, the modernization of Japan brought to us the Art of the West along with its costumes and what not. To the radical reformer no sacrifice was so great as to hinder him in identifying himself with the modern spirit that governs the world. To shake off the lethargy which had settled on the East for centuries, and equip ourselves for the struggle for national existence, was imperative. In blind haste we adopted innovations, injurious and non-essential. Our ancient masterpieces appeared as worthless as the obsolete guns that guarded our coast in Commo-

dore Perry's time. The first government art school, which started in 1884, had only Italian professors. To-day the principal instructors of the government art school are mostly those who studied in Paris and teach what is called the European style.

The Bijitsuin is a protest against these two movements — the pseudo-classic and the pseudo-European. We claim that art must be national, that we shall be lost if cut away from our traditions, and, at the same time, we consider individuality to be the essence of vitality. We do not pretend to be ancient nor endeavor to appear modern. To be true to self, to express what one feels, is our objective. Thus the individual style of our members differs greatly, though in the main they have taken up the thread where Morikaje and Korin left it in the early Tokugawa period.

We accept the naturalism, not the realism, of the later Kioto school. We delight in the color-scheme of the Buddhistic school, but do not necessarily adopt its technique.

The Bijitsuin was founded in 1897 by thirty-nine artists of Tokio, most of whom resigned from the government art school when it became apparent that the authorities insisted upon the increasing prominence of so-called European methods in its curriculum. The members erected cottages near the main building in Yanaka, a suburb of Tokio, that they might work together. Mr. Yokoyama-Taikan, Mr. Hishida-

Shiunso, and Mr. Shimomura-Kwanzan were made professors of painting, and Mr. Rokkaku-Shisui professor of lacquer work. Since then we have grown to ninety-five regular members and nearly three hundred corresponding members scattered throughout Japan. Our building is not large enough to accommodate a great many students, and arrangements are made with the regular members to allow students of painting, sculpture, metal work, lacquer, bronze or ceramics to work at their studios and factories. In fact, the organization is more that of a club than of a regular school. The students come at regular intervals to attend lectures and for the criticism and suggestions of senior members. Two exhibitions are held yearly at Tokio, and a number of local exhibitions in all parts of the country. The students are all admitted free, the running expenses of the school being borne by the voluntary contributions of regular members and a percentage on the sales at the exhibitions.

Much opposition and many difficulties have been and are still encountered. The last stand we made for the preservation of national art is not welcome to the pro-European section of our community, nor to the ultra-conservatives, who are extremely timid about new movements. But, so far, our exhibitions have been successful, and we find more and more sympathizers every day. We hope that, with the help of all real art lovers, we may be able to preserve the true spirit

of Japanese Art, threatened as it is by the enormous complications of a period of transition.

Very little of the work of the Bijitsuin is known in the West, for our prominent members have refrained from joining the government exhibitions at home and abroad. The present exhibition, small as it is, is one of the first presentations to the Western world of our attempts, and I hope it may help make clear the purpose of the new old school of Japanese art. Mr. Yokoyama is an ardent student of the Kanos and of Korin, Mr. Hishida is an admirer of Late Sung and Ashikaga masters, Mr. Shimomura is a Tosa revivalist, and Mr. Rokkaku has followed in the tracks of Zesshin to revivify the Toyotomi ideal. Yet each of these artists has developed a style of his own.

OKAKURA-KAKUZO.